



**Proposed Revisions
REGULATIONS
ESTABLISHING STANDARDS
FOR ACCREDITING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
IN VIRGINIA
8 VAC 20-131-10 et. seq.**

APA Version
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REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR
ACCREDITING PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

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PART I

PURPOSE

8 VAC 20-131-10. Purpose

8 VAC 20-131-10. Purpose.

The foremost purpose of public education in Virginia is to provide children with a quality education to provide them with opportunities to meet their fullest potential in life. The standards for the accreditation of public schools in Virginia are designed to ensure that an effective educational program is established and maintained in Virginia's public schools. The mission of the public education system, ~~first and foremost,~~ is to educate students in the

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essential academic knowledge and skills in order that they may be equipped for citizenship, work, and a private life that is informed and free. The accreditation standards are designed to:

1. Provide an essential foundation of educational programs of high quality in all schools for all students.
2. Encourage continuous appraisal and improvement of the school program for the purpose of raising student achievement.
3. Foster public confidence.
4. Assure recognition of Virginia's public schools by other institutions of learning.
5. Establish a means of determining the effectiveness of schools.

Section 22.1-253.13:3.B. of the Code of Virginia requires that the Virginia Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") promulgate regulations establishing standards for accreditation.

The statutory authority for these regulations is delineated in Section 22.1-19 of the Code of Virginia that includes the requirement that the Board ~~of Education~~ shall provide for the accreditation of public elementary and secondary schools in accordance with regulations prescribed by it.

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PART II

PHILOSOPHY, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

8 VAC 20-131-20. Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives

8 VAC 20-131-20. Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives.

Each school shall have current philosophy, goals, and objectives that shall serve as the basis for all policies and practices, and shall be developed using the following criteria:

A. The philosophy, goals, and objectives shall be developed with the advice of professional and lay people who represent the various populations served by the school and in consideration of the needs of the community, and shall serve as a basis for the creation and review of the biennial school plan.

B. The school's philosophy, goals, and objectives shall be consistent with the Standards of Quality.

C. The goals and objectives shall (1) be written in plain language so as to be understandable to non-educators, including parents, (2) to the extent possible, be stated in measurable terms, and (3) consist primarily of measurable objectives to raise student

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and school achievement in the core academic areas of the Standards of Learning (SOL) ~~disciplines~~, to improve student and staff attendance, to reduce student drop-out rates, and to increase the quality of instruction through professional staff development and licensure.

D. The school staff and community representatives shall review ~~biennially~~ annually the extent to which the school has met its prior goals and objectives, analyze the school's student performance data including data by grade level or academic department as necessary, and report these outcomes to the division superintendent and the school community ~~and the division superintendent~~. ~~A report delivered in writing or given orally in accordance with local school board policy during a regularly scheduled parent-teacher meeting at the school may be used to satisfy the reporting requirement of this section.~~ This report shall be in addition to the school report card required by 8 VAC 20-131-270.B. of these regulations.

E. Copies of the school's philosophy, goals, and objectives shall be available upon request.

PART III

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

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|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 8 VAC 20-131-30. | Student Achievement Expectations |
| 8 VAC 20-131-40. | Literacy Tests |

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8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for Graduation

8 VAC 20-131-60. Transfer of Credits

8 VAC 20-131-30. Student Achievement Expectations.

A. Each student should learn the relevant grade level/course subject matter before promotion to the next grade. ~~For grades in which the SOL tests are given, achievement of a passing score on the SOL tests shall be considered in promotion/retention policies adopted by the local school board. Achievement expectations and participation in SOL testing of students with disabilities will be guided by provisions of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan. Participation of students identified as limited English Proficient shall be determined by a committee convened to make such determinations. Limited English proficient students may be exempted from the SOL tests for one grade level only in grades 3, 5, and 8. In order to be granted verified credit, all students must meet the clock hour and testing requirements set forth in these regulations. The division superintendent shall certify to the Department of Education that the division's promotion/retention policy does not exclude students from membership in a grade or participation in a course in which SOL tests are to be administered.~~

B. ~~Each student at grades 3, 5, and 8 shall take and be~~

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~~expected to achieve a passing score on the SOL tests for the student's~~
~~respective grade.~~ In kindergarten through eighth grade, where SOL
tests are administered, each student shall be expected to achieve a
passing score on these tests. Schools shall use the SOL test results
in kindergarten through eighth grade as part of a ~~multiple~~ set of
multiple criteria for determining ~~advancing or retaining~~ the promotion
or retention of students ~~in grades 3, 5, and 8.~~ No
~~promotion/retention policy shall be written in a manner as to~~
~~systematically exclude students from membership in a grade or~~
~~participation in a course in which SOL tests are to be administered.~~

C. Each student in middle and secondary schools shall take all
applicable end-of-course SOL tests following course instruction.
Students who achieve a passing score on an end-of-course SOL test
~~shall~~ may be awarded a verified unit of credit in that course in
accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these
regulations. Students may earn verified units of credits in any
courses for which end-of-course SOL tests are available. Middle and
secondary schools may consider the student's end-of-course SOL test
score in determining the student's final course grade. The Board may
approve other alternative means of assessment to verify student
achievement in accordance with guidelines adopted for verified units
of credit described in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations.

D. ~~Students with disabilities for whom participation in the~~

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~~SOL testing program is deemed inappropriate according to their IEP or 504 plan and who cannot participate in the SOL tests shall be expected to demonstrate proficiency on an alternative assessment prescribed by the Board in accordance with federal laws and regulations beginning with school year 2000-2001. Participation in SOL testing by students with disabilities will be prescribed by provisions of their Individualized Education Program(IEP) or 504 Plan.~~

Beginning with the school year 2000-01, students with disabilities for whom participation in an alternate assessment is prescribed in their IEP or 504 Plan shall demonstrate proficiency on that assessment.

E. Participation in SOL testing by students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) shall be guided by a school-based committee convened to make such determinations. In kindergarten through eighth grade, limited English proficient students may be granted a one-time exemption from SOL testing in each of the four core areas.

8 VAC 20-131-40. Literacy Passport Test.

~~The SOL assessments shall constitute the primary evaluation of student academic achievement for the purpose of these regulations.~~

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~~Students shall also pass the literacy tests prescribed by the Board of Education in reading, writing, and mathematics in order to be promoted to the ninth grade except for students with disabilities who are progressing according to the objectives of their individualized education program (IEP) or 504 Plan. Students transferring to a Virginia public school prior to the 9th grade shall also be required to pass the literacy tests in order to be promoted to the 9th grade. Students who are not promoted shall be enrolled in alternative programs leading to one or more of the following:~~

Students who were in the eighth grade or above in the 1998-99 school year shall also be required to pass the Literacy Passport Tests in order to receive a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma from a Virginia public school.

In order to receive a graded status, such students must pass the Literacy Passport Tests, except for students with disabilities who progress according to the goals of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.

Students who are not eligible for graded status shall be enrolled in appropriate programs leading to passing of the Literacy Passport Tests and one or more of the following:

- ~~1. Passing the literacy tests;~~

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- ~~21.~~ High School ~~Graduation~~ Diploma;
- ~~32.~~ General Educational Development (GED) Certificate;
- ~~43.~~ Certificate of Program Completion; and
- ~~54.~~ Job-entry skills.

8 VAC 20-131-50. Requirements for Graduation.

~~To receive a high school diploma, a student shall pass all components of the Literacy Passport Test as required by the Standards of Quality and prescribed by the Board of Education and meet the minimum requirements for one of the two diplomas outlined below for grades 9-12. These~~ following requirements ~~shall be the only requirements for a diploma, except that unless~~ a local school board has ~~may~~ prescribed additional requirements ~~for a diploma if such requirements which~~ have been approved by the Board ~~of Education~~. All additional requirements prescribed by local school boards and in effect as of June 30, 1997 are approved to continue through June 30, ~~1999~~ 2000, without further action by the Board.

A. Requirements for a Standard Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 1998-99 ~~(graduating class of 2001-02)~~, students shall earn the standard units of credits outlined in Section 2 below. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2000-01 ~~(graduating class of 2003-04)~~, students shall

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earn standard units of credit described in Section 2 below, and of the ~~standard~~ total units of credit earned, students shall earn the following number of verified units of credit (see 8 VAC 20-131-110 of these regulations):

- a. English-two;
- b. math-one;
- c. science-one;
- d. history/social science-one; and
- e. one additional verified unit of credit of the

student's own choosing.

2. Credits Required for Graduation with a Standard Diploma

Discipline Area	Units Of Credit	Number of these Required to be Verified
English	4	2
Mathematics ¹	3	1
Laboratory Science ²	3	1
History and Social Sciences ³	3	1
Health and Physical Education	2	

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Fine Arts or Practical	1	
Arts		
Electives	6	
Student Selected Test		1
Total	22	6

¹Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of Algebra and shall include at least two course selections from among Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra and Geometry. The Board of ~~Education~~ may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

²Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections at least two different science disciplines: Earth Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. The Board of ~~Education~~ may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

³Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and one World History/Geography course. Courses which satisfy the World History/Geography course are: (a) World History; (b) World Geography; (c) World History and Geography to 1000 A.D.; (d) World History and Geography 1000 A.D. to the Present; or (e) a semester course of World History to 1000 A.D. and a semester course of World Geography. The Board of ~~Education~~ may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

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Students completing the requirements for the standard diploma may be eligible to receive ~~a Board of Education Seal and/or other~~ an honor deemed appropriate by the local school board as described in ~~Section subsection~~ DE below.

B. Requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma.

1. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 1998-99 ~~(graduating class of 2001-02)~~, students shall earn the standard units of credits outlined in Section 2 below. Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2000-01 ~~(graduating class of 2003-04)~~, students shall earn the standard units of credits outlined in Section 2 below, and of the total credits earned, students shall earn the following number of verified units of credits (see 8 VAC 20-131-110 of these regulations):

- a. English-two;
- b. math-two;
- c. science-two;
- d. history/social science-two; and
- e. one additional verified unit of credit of the student's own choosing.

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Studies Diploma

Discipline Area	Units of Credit	Number of these Required to be Verified
English	4	2
Mathematics ¹	4	2
Laboratory Science ²	4	2
History and Social Sciences ³	4	2
Foreign Language ⁴	3	
Health and Physical Education	2	
Fine Arts or Practical Arts	1	
Electives	2	
Student Selected Test		1
Total	24	9

¹Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall be at or above the level of Algebra and shall include at least three different course selections from among: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of Algebra II. The Board of

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~~Education~~ may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

²Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: Earth Sciences, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. The Board ~~of Education~~ may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

³Courses completed to satisfy this requirement shall include U.S. and Virginia History, U.S. and Virginia Government, and two World History/Geography courses. Acceptable courses to satisfy the World History/Geography requirements include: (a) World History, and World Geography; (b) World History and Geography to 1000 A.D., and World History and Geography from 1000 A.D. to the Present; or (c) a semester course of World Geography, a semester course of World History to 1000 A.D., and a year-long course of World History 1000 A.D. to the Present. The Board ~~of Education~~ may approve additional courses to satisfy this requirement.

⁴Three years of one language or two years of two languages.

Students completing the requirements for the advanced studies diploma may be eligible to receive ~~a Governor's Seal and/or other~~ an honor deemed appropriate by the local school board as described in ~~Section~~ subsection DE below.

C. When students below the ninth grade successfully complete courses offered for credit in grades 9 through 12, credit shall be

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counted toward meeting the standard units required for graduation provided the courses meet SOL content requirements or are equivalent in content and academic rigor as those courses offered at the secondary level, ~~or verified units provided students achieve a passing score on end of course SOL tests.~~ To earn a verified unit of credit for these courses, students must meet the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations.

D. At a student's request, the local school board shall communicate or otherwise make known to institutions of higher education, potential employers, or other applicable third parties, in a manner that the local school board deems appropriate, that a student has attained the state's academic expectations by earning a Virginia diploma and the value of such a diploma is not affected in any way by the accreditation status of the student's school.

DE. Awards for Exemplary Student Performance

~~1. Students who complete the requirements for a standard diploma with an average grade of "B" or better in the required courses will receive a Board of Education Seal on the diploma.~~ Students who demonstrate academic excellence and or outstanding achievements may be eligible for one of the following awards:

1. The Governor's Seal of Advanced Academic Excellence will be awarded to students who complete the requirements for an

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Advanced Studies Diploma and earn a "Pass/Advanced" rating on the SOL tests used for verified units of credit to fulfill the diploma requirement. Students electing to substitute an alternative means of earning verified units of credit as prescribed by 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations must meet requirements of guidelines adopted by the Board.

~~2. Students who complete the requirements for an advanced studies diploma with an average grade of "B" or better and successfully complete at least one advanced placement course (AP), or one college-level course for credit will receive a Governor's Seal on the diploma.~~ The Board of Education's Seal of Academic Excellence will be awarded to students who complete the requirements for an Advanced Studies diploma with an "A" average in the courses required for the diploma and have successfully completed at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course, International Baccalaureate (IB) course, one college-level course, or one alternative means of earning verified units of credit in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations. Students electing to substitute an alternative means to meet this requirement must meet provisions specified in guidelines adopted by the Board for earning verified units of credit described in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations to qualify for this honor.

3. The Superintendent's Seal of Academic Achievement will be awarded to students who complete the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma with a "B" average in the courses required for the

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diploma and have completed one college-level course or earned at least one verified unit of credit through an alternative means in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations.

4. The Commonwealth Seal of Academic Achievement will be awarded to students who complete the requirements for a standard diploma with an "A" average in the courses required for the diploma.

5. The Board of Education's Vocational Seal of Excellence will be awarded to students who complete a prescribed sequence of courses in a vocational area of concentration or specialization that they choose and either: (a) maintain an "A" average in those courses; or (b) pass an examination in a vocational area that confers either a certificate from a recognized trade or professional association or acquire a professional license in that vocational area from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

36. Students may receive other seals or awards for exceptional academic, vocational, citizenship, or other exemplary performance in accordance with criteria defined by the local school board.

EF. Students completing graduation requirements in a summer school accredited under these standards shall be eligible for a diploma. The last school attended by the student during the regular session shall award the diploma unless otherwise agreed upon by the principals of the two schools.

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~~FG.~~ Students who complete a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board but who do not qualify for diplomas shall be awarded a Certificate of Program Completion by the local school board.

~~GH.~~ Students who complete ~~honors, advanced,~~ Advanced Placement, college-level or courses required for an International Baccalaureate Diploma or other alternative means to earn verified units of credit shall be deemed to have completed the requirements for graduation under these standards provided they have earned the standard units of credit and passed the end-of-course tests required to earn verified units of credits in accordance with the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-50.A. and B. of these regulations as required of students earning either a standard or an advanced studies diploma, ~~or, in the case of a complete. International Baccalaureate Diploma program, the number of verified credits required for an Advanced Studies Diploma.~~

I. Students considering using an alternative means of earning verified units of credit as allowed by 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations shall be counseled annually regarding the opportunities for doing so and the consequences of failing to fulfill the obligations to complete the requirements for verified units of credit.

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8 VAC 20-131-60. Transfer of Credits.

A. A secondary school shall accept credits received from other accredited secondary schools, including ~~summer schools, special sessions,~~ schools accredited through the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE). ~~and educational programs operated by the state.~~ The Board will review on an annual basis the accrediting procedures of the VCPE and direct any changes and modifications of such procedures in relation to the authority granted under these provisions.

Students transferring into a Virginia public school shall be required to meet the requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50 to receive a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma except as modified by subsection E below. To receive a Special Diploma or Certificate of Program Completion, a student must meet the requirements prescribed by the Standards of Quality.

B. Standard or verified units of credit earned by a student in a Virginia public school shall be transferable without limitation regardless of the accreditation status of the Virginia public school in which the credits were earned.

BC. Records of transferred students shall be sent directly to the school receiving the student upon request of the receiving school

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in accordance with the provisions of the "Management of the Student's Scholastic Records in Virginia."

~~C. The transcript of a student who graduates or transfers from a Virginia secondary school shall show the minimum units of standard or verified credit earned and required for graduation with a standard or advanced studies diploma.~~

~~D. Students transferring into a Virginia school division shall be required to earn a minimum of 22 standard credits (6 of which must be verified credits) for graduation. Each student's prior record shall be evaluated to determine the number of credits previously earned and the number of additional credits required for graduation. Specified courses normally taken at lower grade levels shall not be required, provided the student has completed the courses required at those grade levels by the school division or state from which he or she transferred. Students transferring from states not giving credit for health and physical education shall not be required to repeat these courses. Students transferring after the beginning of their senior or 12th grade year shall be given every opportunity to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma. If it is not possible for the student to meet the requirements for a diploma, arrangements should be made for the student's previous school to award the diploma. If this arrangement cannot be made, a waiver of the verified credit requirements may be available to the student. The Department of~~

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~~Education may grant such waivers upon request by the local school board.~~ The academic record of a student transferring into Virginia public schools from other than a Virginia public school, shall be evaluated to determine the number of standard units of credit that have been earned, including credit from schools outside the United States, and the number of verified units of credit needed to graduate in accordance with subsection E below. Virginia public schools shall accept standard and verified units of credit from other Virginia public schools and state-operated programs. Credit also shall be accepted for courses satisfactorily completed in accredited colleges and universities when prior written approval of the principal has been granted or the student has been given credit by the previous school attended.

Students transferring above grade 10 from schools or other education programs that do not require or give credit for health and physical education shall not be required to take these courses to meet graduation requirements.

E. Students transferring into a Virginia public school from other than a Virginia public school after the tenth grade shall be encouraged to earn as many credits as possible toward graduation that are prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50. However, no transfer student shall earn fewer than the following number of verified units nor shall such

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students be required to take SOL tests for verified units of credit in courses previously completed at another school or program of study unless necessary to meet the requirements listed in 1 and 2 below:

1. For a Standard Diploma:

a. Students transferring in at the ninth or at the beginning of the tenth grade shall earn credit as prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations;

b. Students transferring in during the tenth grade or at the beginning of the eleventh grade shall earn a minimum of four verified units of credit: one each in English, mathematics, history, and science; and,

c. Students transferring in during the eleventh grade or at the beginning of the twelfth grade shall earn a minimum of two verified units of credit: one in English, and one of the student's choosing.

2. For an Advanced Studies Diploma:

a. Students transferring in at the ninth or at the beginning of the tenth grade shall earn credit as prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations;

b. Students transferring in during the tenth grade or at the beginning of the eleventh grade shall earn a minimum of six verified units of credit: two in English, and one each in mathematics, history, and science and one of the student's choosing; and

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c. Students transferring in during the eleventh grade or at the beginning of the twelfth grade shall earn a minimum of four verified units of credit: one in English and three of the student's choosing.

F. Students transferring into a Virginia secondary school after the first semester of their eleventh grade year, must meet the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-60.E.1.c or E.2.c. Students transferring after 20 instructional hours per course of their senior or twelfth grade year shall be given every opportunity to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. If it is not possible for the student to meet the requirements for a diploma, arrangements should be made for the student's previous school to award the diploma. If these arrangements cannot be made, a waiver of the verified unit of credit requirements may be available to the student. The Department of Education may grant such waivers upon request by the local school board in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the Board.

G. The transcript of a student who graduates or transfers from a Virginia secondary school shall conform to the requirements of 8 VAC 20-150-10 et. seq., Regulations Governing Secondary School Transcripts.

The accreditation status of a high school shall not be included on the student transcript provided to colleges, universities, or

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employers. The Board expressly states that any student who has met the graduation requirements established in 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations and has received a Virginia diploma holds a diploma that should be recognized as equal to any other Virginia diploma, regardless of the accreditation status of the student's high school. It is the express policy of the Board that no student shall be affected by the accreditation status of the student's school. The Board shall take appropriate action, from time to time, to ensure that no student is affected by the accreditation status of the student's school.

PART IV

SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

8 VAC 20-131-70.	Program of Instruction and Learning Objectives
8 VAC 20-131-80.	Instructional Program in Elementary Schools
8 VAC 20-131-90.	Instructional Program in Middle Schools
8 VAC 20-131-100.	Instructional Program in Secondary Schools
8 VAC 20-131-110.	Standard and Verified Units of Credit
8 VAC 20-131-120.	Summer School
8 VAC 20-131-130.	Elective Courses
8 VAC 20-131-140.	College Preparation Program and Opportunities for Postsecondary Credit

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- 8 VAC 20-131-150. Standard School Year and School Day
- 8 VAC 20-131-160. Additional Reading Instruction
- 8 VAC 20-131-170. Family Life Education
- 8 VAC 20-131-180. Off-Site Instructional Programs
- 8 VAC 20-131-190. Library Media, Materials and Equipment
- 8 VAC 20-131-200. Extracurricular and Other School Activities

8 VAC 20-131-70. Program of Instruction and Learning Objectives.

A. Each school shall provide a program of instruction that promotes individual student academic achievement in the essential academic disciplines and shall provide additional instructional opportunities that meet the abilities, interests, and educational needs of students. Each school shall establish learning objectives to be achieved by students at successive grade levels that meet or exceed the knowledge and skills contained in the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science adopted by the Board of ~~Education~~ in June 1995 and shall continually assess the progress of each student in relation to the objectives.

B. Instruction shall be designed to accommodate all students, including those with disabilities, those identified as gifted/talented and/or those who have limited English proficiency.

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Each school shall provide students identified as gifted/talented with instructional programs taught by teachers with special training or experience in working with gifted/talented students.

Students with disabilities shall have the opportunity to receive a full continuum of education services, in accordance with the "Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia," ~~the "Special Education Program Standards"~~ and other pertinent federal/state regulations.

8 VAC 20-131-80. Instructional Program in Elementary Schools.

A. Each elementary school shall provide each student a program of instruction which corresponds to the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, and physical education and health.

B. In grades K-3, reading writing, spelling, and mathematics shall be ~~the core~~ the focus of the instructional program. Schools shall maintain, in a manner prescribed by the Board, an early skills and knowledge achievement record in reading and math for each student in grades K-3 to monitor student progress and to promote successful achievement ~~in~~ on the third grade SOL tests. This record shall be

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included with the student's records if the student transfers to a new school.

C. Instructional Time. To provide students with sufficient opportunity to learn, a minimum of 75% of the annual instructional time of 990 hours shall be given to instruction in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. Students who are not successfully progressing in early reading proficiency and/or who are unable to read the materials necessary for instruction with comprehension shall receive additional instructional time in reading.

8 VAC 20-131-90. Instructional Program in Middle Schools.

A. Each middle ~~level~~ school shall provide each student a program of instruction which corresponds to the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, foreign language, physical education and health, and career and vocational exploration.

B. The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight ~~offerings~~ courses to students in eighth grade. ~~four required courses~~ (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science) shall be

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required. ~~And—f~~Four elective courses (Level one in of a foreign language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and vocational exploration) shall be available.

C. Credit-bearing Course Opportunities. Level one of a foreign language shall be available to all eighth-grade students.—~~In any high school credit bearing course taken in middle school, parents may request that grades be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course.—Notice of this provision must be provided to parents with a deadline and format for making such a request.—~~Nothing in these regulations shall be construed to prevent a middle school from offering any other appropriate credit-bearing courses for graduation.

D. Instructional Time. To provide students a sufficient opportunity to learn, each student shall be provided 140 clock hours per year of instruction in each of the four disciplines of English, math, science, and history/social science. Sixth-grade students may receive an alternative schedule of instruction provided each student receives at least 560 total clock hours of instruction in the four academic disciplines.

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A. Each secondary school shall provide each student a program of instruction in the academic areas of English, mathematics, science, and history/social science that enables each student to meet the graduation requirements described in 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations, and shall offer opportunities for students to pursue a program of studies in ~~several~~ academics, fine arts, and vocational areas including:

1. Vocational education choices that prepare the student as a vocational program completer in one of three or more occupational areas and that prepare the student for technical or pre-professional post secondary programs;

2. Course work and experiences that prepare the student for college-level studies including access to at least two Advanced Placement courses or two college-level courses for credit; ~~and~~

3. Preparation for ~~scholastic aptitude~~ college admissions tests; and

4. Opportunities to study and explore the fine arts.

B. Minimum course offerings for each secondary school, ~~grades 9-12,~~ shall provide ~~that~~ opportunities for students ~~can~~ to meet the graduation requirements stated in ~~this document~~ 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations and must include:

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Academic Subjects	23
English	(4)
Mathematics	(4)
Science (Laboratory)	(4)
History and Social	(4)
Sciences	
Foreign Language	(3)
Electives	(4)
Vocational Education	11
Fine Arts	2
Health and Physical	2
Education	
Total Units	38

C. Classroom driver education may count for 36 class periods of health education. Students shall not be removed from classes other than health and physical education for the in-car phase of driver education.

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8 VAC 20-131-110. Standard and Verified Units of Credit.

A. The standard unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction and successful completion of the requirements of the course. When credit is awarded in less than whole units, the increment awarded must be no greater than the fractional part of the 140 hours of instruction provided. If a school division elects to award credit ~~in a non-core academic course~~ on a basis other than the standard unit of credit defined above, the ~~locality~~ local school division shall develop a written policy approved by the superintendent and school board which ensures:

1. that the content of the course for which credit is awarded is comparable to 140 clock hours of instruction; and
2. that upon completion, the student will have met the aims and objectives of the course.

B. A verified unit of credit for graduation shall be based on a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction, successful completion of the requirements of the course, and the achievement by the student of a passing score on the end-of-course SOL ~~Standards of Learning~~ test for that course or alternative test as described below.

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In addition to the SOL tests, the Board may approve alternative tests for which the student may earn a verified unit of credit. An alternative test must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

1. The test must be standardized and graded independently of the school or school division in which the test is given;
2. The test must be criterion-referenced and knowledge-based;
3. The test must be administered on a multistate or international basis; and
4. The test must be given in a course that incorporates the SOL.

The Board will set the passing score that must be achieved to earn a verified unit of credit on the alternative test.

C. A school employing a scheduling configuration of less than 140 clock hours per course in the 1996-97 school year may retain that scheduling configuration provided such school is rated Fully Accredited with High Honors, Fully Accredited with Honors, or "Fully Accredited." Schools rated "Accredited with Warning Accredited with Warning (in specific area)" may be required to address their scheduling configuration in their ~~corrective action~~ School Improvement pPlan required by 8 VAC 20-131-310D of these regulations.

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8 VAC 20-131-120. Summer School.

The courses offered and the quality of instruction in the summer school program shall be equal in quality to the program comparable to that offered during the regular school term. At the middle and secondary school levels, credit for courses taken for credit toward graduation other than a repeat course shall be awarded in accordance with the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-110. Students must also meet the requirements for SOL testing if appropriate.

A. At the middle and secondary school levels, credit for repeated work courses ordinarily will be granted on the same basis as that for new work courses; however, with prior approval of the principal, certain students may be allowed to enroll in two repeat subjects courses to be completed in not less than 75 70 clock hours of instruction per unit of credit. Students must also meet the requirements for SOL testing if appropriate.

B. Summer school instruction at any level, which is provided as part of a state-funded remedial program, shall be designed to improve specific identified student deficiencies. Such programs shall be conducted in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board.

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8 VAC 20-131-130. Elective Courses.

Locally developed elective courses offered for credit toward high school graduation shall be approved by the division superintendent and local school board.

8 VAC 20-131-140. College Preparation Programs and Opportunities
for Postsecondary Credit.

Each middle and secondary school shall provide for the early identification and enrollment of students in a college preparation program with a range of educational and academic experiences in and outside the classroom, including an emphasis on experiences that will motivate disadvantaged and minority students to attend college.

Beginning in the middle-school years, students shall be counseled as to opportunities for beginning postsecondary education prior to high school graduation. Students taking advantage of such opportunities shall not be denied participation in school activities for which they are otherwise eligible. Wherever possible, students shall be encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously for high school graduation and college degree credit (dual enrollment), under the following conditions:

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1. ~~prior~~ written approval of the high school principal prior to participation in for the cross-registration dual enrollment must be obtained;
2. the college must accept the student for admission to the course(s); and
3. the course(s) must be given by the college for degree credits (~~hence~~, no remedial courses will be accepted).

Schools that comply with this standard shall not be penalized in receiving state appropriations.

8 VAC 20-131-150. Standard School Year and School Day.

A. The standard school year shall be 180 days. The standard school day for students in grades 1-12 shall average at least 5 ½ hours, excluding ~~intermissions~~ breaks for meals, and a minimum of 3 hours for kindergarten. School divisions may develop alternative schedules for meeting these requirements as long as a minimum of 990 hours of instructional time is provided for grades 1-12 and 540 hours for kindergarten. Such alternative plans must be approved by the local school board and by the Board ~~of Education~~, under guidelines established by the Board ~~of Education~~. No alternative plan which reduces the instructional time in the core academics shall be approved.

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B. All students in grades 1-12 shall maintain a full-day schedule of classes (5 ½ hours), unless a waiver is granted ~~by the local superintendent of schools. Conditions of such waivers shall be~~ in accordance with policies defined by the local school board.

8 VAC 20-131-160. Additional Reading Instruction.

Each school shall ensure that students who are unable to read with comprehension the materials necessary for instruction receive additional instruction in reading, which may include summer school.

8 VAC 20-131-170. Family Life Education.

Each school may implement the Standards of Learning for the Family Life Education program promulgated by the Board ~~of Education~~ or a Family Life Education program consistent with the guidelines developed by the Board ~~of Education~~ which shall have the goals of reducing the incidence of pregnancy and/or sexually-transmitted diseases and substance abuse among teenagers.

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8 VAC 20-131-180. Off-Site Instruction.

A. Homebound Instruction. Homebound instruction shall be made available to students who are confined for periods that would prevent normal school attendance based upon certification of need by a licensed physician or licensed clinical psychologist. For students eligible for special education and/or related services, the Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan committee must revise the IEP, as appropriate. Credit for the work shall be awarded when it is done under the supervision of a certified teacher, a person eligible to hold a Virginia certificate, or other appropriately licensed professional, employed by the local school board, and meets the requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-110 of these regulations.

B. Correspondence Courses. Students may enroll in and receive a standard or verified unit of credit for supervised correspondence courses ~~in subjects not available to them through the school's schedule~~ with prior approval of the principal. Credit shall be awarded for the successful completion of such courses when the course is equivalent to that offered in the regular school program and the work is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher, or a person eligible to hold a Virginia license, approved by the local school ~~authorities board~~. Verified units of credit may be earned when the student has passed the SOL test associated with the correspondence course completed. The local school board shall develop policies

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governing this method of instruction in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110 and the administration of required SOL tests prescribed by 8 VAC 20-131-30 of these regulations.

C. Schools are encouraged to pursue alternative means to deliver instruction to accommodate student needs through emerging technologies and other similar means. Credit may be awarded for successful completion of such courses when the course is equivalent to that offered in the regular school program and the work is done under the supervision of a licensed teacher, or a person eligible to hold a Virginia teaching license and approved by local school board. Verified units of credit may be earned when the student has successfully completed the requirements and passed the SOL test associated with the course. The local school board shall develop policies governing this method of delivery of instruction that shall include the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-110 and the administration of required SOL tests prescribed by 8 VAC 20-131-30 of these regulations.

8 VAC 20-131-190. Library Media, Materials, and Equipment.

A. Library Media Services. Each school shall maintain an organized library media center as the resource center of the school and provide a unified program of media services and activities for students and teachers before, during, and after school. The library

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media center shall contain hard copy, electronic technological resources, materials, and equipment which are sufficient to meet research, inquiry, and reading requirements of the instructional program and general student interest.

B. Materials and Equipment. Each school shall provide a variety of materials and equipment to support the instructional program.

8 VAC 20-131-200. Extracurricular and Other School Activities.

A. School-sponsored extracurricular activities shall be under the direct supervision of the staff and shall contribute to the educational objectives of the school. Extracurricular activities must be organized to avoid interrupting the instructional program. Extracurricular activities shall not be permitted to interfere with the student's required instructional activities. Extracurricular activities and eligibility requirements shall be established and approved by the superintendent and the school board.

B. Competitive sports of a varsity nature (scheduled league games) shall be prohibited as a part of the elementary school program.

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PART V

SCHOOL AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

- 8 VAC 20-131-210. Role of the Principal
- 8 VAC 20-131-220. Role of Professional Teaching Staff
- 8 VAC 20-131-230. Role of Support Staff
- 8 VAC 20-131-240. Administrative and Support Staff Required
- ~~8 VAC 20-131-250. Alternative Staffing Plan~~

- 8 VAC 20-131-210. Role of the Principal.

A. The principal ~~shall be responsible for~~ is recognized as the instructional leadership leader of the school and is responsible for effective school management that promotes positive student achievement, a safe and secure environment in which to teach and learn, and efficient use of resources. As a matter of policy, the Board, through these standards, recognizes the critically important role of principals to the success of public schools and the students who attend those schools and recommends that local school boards provide principals with the maximum authority available under law in all matters affecting the school including, but not limited to, instruction and personnel, in a manner that allows the principal to be held accountable in a fair and consistent manner for matters under his or her direct control.

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B. Instructional Leadership. The principal, responsible for ensuring students are provided an opportunity to learn, shall:

1. Protect the academic instructional time from unnecessary interruptions and disruptions and enable the professional teaching staff to spend the maximum time possible in the teaching/learning process by keeping to a minimum clerical responsibility and the time students are out of class;

2. Ensure that the school division's student code of conduct is enforced and ~~that the school environment is safe and secure~~ shall seek to maintain a safe and secure school environment;

3. Analyze the school's test ~~and subtest~~ scores annually by grade and by discipline to:

a. direct and require appropriate ~~remediation/~~ intervention prevention, intervention, and/or remediation to those students performing below grade level or not passing the SOL tests;

b. involve the staff of the school in identifying the types of staff development needed to improve student achievement and ensure that the staff participate in those activities; and

c. analyze classroom practices and methods for improvement of instruction.

4. Ensure that students' records are maintained and that criteria used in making placement and promotion decisions, as well as

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any instructional interventions used to improve the student's performance, are included in the record;

5. Monitor and evaluate the quality of instruction, ~~and provide for in-service training,~~ staff development, ~~professional assistance and support that is~~ designed to improve instruction, and ~~ensure~~ seek to ensure the successful attainment of the knowledge and skills required for students by the SOL; and

6. Maintain records of students who drop out of school, including their reasons for dropping out and actions taken to prevent students from dropping out.

C. School Management Leadership. The principal, responsible for effective school management, shall:

1. Work with staff to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy and to facilitate constructive communication by establishing and maintaining a current handbook of personnel policies and procedures;

2. Work with the community to involve parents and citizens in the educational program and facilitate communication with parents by maintaining and disseminating a current student handbook of policies and procedures that includes the school division's standards of student conduct and procedures for enforcement, along with other matters of interest to parents and students;

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3. Maintain a current record of licensure, endorsement, and in-service training completed by staff; and

4. Maintain records of receipts and disbursements of all funds handled. These records shall be audited annually by a professional accountant approved by the local school board.

8 VAC 20-131-220. Role of Professional Teaching Staff.

The professional teaching staff shall be responsible for providing instruction that is educationally sound in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy, which is conducive to learning and in which all students are expected to achieve the objectives of the Standards of Learning for the appropriate grade level or ~~discipline~~ course. The staff shall:

A. Serve as ~~leadership models of~~ role models for effective oral and written communication with special attention to the correct use of language and spelling.

B. Strive to strengthen the basic skills of students in all subjects.

C. Establish teaching objectives to achieve the following:

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1. Identify what students are expected to learn; and
2. Inform students of the achievement expected and keep them engaged in learning tasks;

D. Provide for individual differences of students through the use of differentiated instruction, varied materials, and activities suitable to their interests and abilities.

E. Assess the progress of students and report promptly and constructively to them and their parents.

8 VAC 20-131-230. Role of Support Staff.

The school's support staff shall work with the principal and professional teaching staff to promote student achievement and successful attainment of the school's goals.

8 VAC 20-131-240. Administrative and Support Staff Required.

A. Each school shall have the ~~required~~ staff as specified in the Standards of Quality with proper licenses and endorsements including:- ~~The following shall be the minimum administrative and support staffing according to type of school and student enrollment:-~~

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1. Position: principal; elementary: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300; Middle: one full-time; secondary: one full-time.

2. Position: assistant principal; elementary: one half-time at 600, one full-time at 900; middle: one full-time each 600; secondary: one full-time each 600.

3. Position: librarian; elementary: part time to 299, one full-time at 300; middle: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300, two full-time at 1000; secondary: one half-time to 299, one full-time at 300, two full-time at 1000.

4. Position: guidance counselors or reading specialists; elementary: one hour per day per 100, one full-time at 500, one hour per day additional time per 100 or major fraction.

5. Position: guidance counselor: middle: one period per 80, one full-time at 400, one additional period per 80 or major fraction; secondary: one period per 70, one full-time at 350, one additional period per 70 or major fraction.

6. Position: clerical; elementary: part time to 299, one full-time at 300; middle: one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and one full-time for the library at 750; secondary: one full-time and one additional full-time for each 600 beyond 200 and one full-time for the library at 750.

~~B. A combined school, such as K-12, shall meet at all grade levels the staffing requirements for the highest grade level in that~~

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~~school. This requirement shall apply to all staff, except the guidance staff, and shall be based on the school's total enrollment. The guidance staff requirement shall be based on the enrollment at the various school organization levels as defined in these regulations.~~

EB. The principal of each middle and secondary school shall be employed on a twelve-month basis.

EC. Each secondary school with 350 or more students and each middle school with 400 or more students shall employ at least one member of the guidance staff for 11 months. Guidance counseling shall be provided for students to ensure that a program of studies contributing to the student's academic achievement and meeting the graduation requirements specified in 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations are being followed. In addition, the counseling program shall provide for a minimum of 60% of the time of each member of the guidance staff devoted to such counseling of students.

ED. Middle school teachers in schools with a seven-period day may teach 150 student periods per day or 30 class periods per week, provided all teachers with more than 25 class periods per week have one period per day unencumbered of ~~all~~ any teaching and/or supervisory duties.

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~~F. The secondary classroom teacher's standard load shall be no more than 25 class periods per week. One class period each day, unencumbered by supervisory or teaching duties, shall be provided for every full-time classroom teacher for instructional planning. Teachers of block programs with no more than 120 student periods per day may teach 30 class periods per week. Teachers who teach very small classes may teach 30 class periods per week, provided the teaching load does not exceed 75 student periods per day. If a classroom teacher teaches 30 class periods per week with more than 75 student periods per day (120 in block programs) an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.~~

E. Full-time secondary classroom teachers shall be provided planning time unencumbered by supervisory or teaching duties equal to a minimum of 12% of an instructional day. An appropriate contractual agreement and compensation shall be provided for a full-time classroom teacher whose planning time does not meet the 12% minimum.

~~GF.~~ Middle or secondary school teachers shall teach no more than 750 student periods per week; however, physical education and music teachers may teach 1,000 student periods per week.

~~HG.~~ Each school shall report the extent to which an unencumbered lunch is provided for all classroom teachers.

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~~¶H.~~ ~~The number of students~~ Staff-student ratios in special and vocational education classrooms shall comply with regulations of the Board of Education.

~~¶I.~~ Pupil personnel services, including visiting teachers/school social workers, school psychologists, and guidance counselors, shall be available as necessary to promote academic achievement.

~~8 VAC 20-131-250. Alternative Staffing Plan.~~

~~At the discretion of local school authorities, an alternative staffing plan may be developed which ensures that the services set forth in these standards are met. Any alternative staffing plan shall be submitted to the Department of Education for approval. An alternative staffing plan that reduces the number of staff positions will not be acceptable.~~

PART VI

SCHOOL FACILITIES AND SAFETY

8 VAC 20-131-260. School Facilities and Safety

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8 VAC 20-131-260. School Facilities and Safety.

A. Each school shall be maintained in a manner ensuring compliance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code and regulations of the Board of ~~Education~~ pertaining to facilities. In addition, the school administration shall:

1. Maintain a physical plant that is accessible, barrier-free, safe, and clean;
2. Provide for the proper outdoor display of flags of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Virginia;
3. Provide suitable space for classrooms, administrative staff, pupil personnel services, library and media services, and for the needs and safety of physical education; and
4. Provide adequate, safe, and properly equipped laboratories to meet the needs of instruction in the sciences, ~~computer~~ technology, fine arts, and vocational programs.

B. Each school shall maintain records of regular safety, health and fire inspections that have been conducted and certified by local health and fire departments. The frequency of such inspections shall be determined by the local school board in consultation with the local health and fire departments. In addition, the school administration shall:

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1. Equip all exit doors with panic hardware as required by the Uniform Statewide Building Code; and

2. Conduct fire drills at least once a week during the first month of school and at least once each month for the remainder of the school term. Evacuation routes for students shall be posted in each room. Additionally, at least one simulated lock-down and crisis emergency evacuation activity should be conducted early in the school year.

C. Each school shall have contingency plans for emergencies that includes staff certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), the Heimlich maneuver, and emergency first aid. In addition, the school administration shall ensure that the school has:

1. Written procedures to follow in emergencies such as fire, injury, illness, and violent or threatening behavior. The plan shall be outlined in the student handbook and discussed with staff and students during the first week of each school year;

2. Space for the proper care of students who become ill; and

3. A written procedure, in accordance with guidelines established by the local school board, for responding to violent, disruptive or illegal activities by students on school property or during a school-sponsored activity.

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PART VII

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

8 VAC 20-131-270. School and Community Communications

8 VAC 20-131-270. School and Community Communications.

Each school shall promote communication and foster mutual understanding with parents and the community. Each school shall:

A. Involve parents, citizens, community agencies and representatives from business and industry in developing, disseminating and explaining the biennial school plan, on advisory committees, in curriculum studies, and in evaluating the educational program.

B. Provide annually to the parents and the community a School Performance Report Card, in a manner prescribed by the Board. ~~and beginning with data from the 1997-98 school year, to the parents of children attending the school and to the community that includes, but is not limited to:~~ The information contained therein will be for the most recent three-year period. Such information shall include but not be limited to:

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~~1. School-wide test scores on the SOL tests; statewide averages and division averages for the most recent three-year period for which such data are available; students with disabilities and limited English proficient students' participation in those tests; the performance of children with disabilities on the SOL tests or alternate assessments as appropriate; the percent of students with disabilities and the percent of limited English proficient students exempted from SOL testing; and the percent of the school population eligible to participate in the SOL testing program~~

1. SOL test scores for the school, school division, and state.

2. Percent of students tested, as well as the percent of students not tested, to include a breakout of students with disabilities and limited English proficient students.

3. Percentage of students who are otherwise eligible but do not take the SOL tests due to enrollment in an alternative, or any other program not leading to a standard, advanced studies, or IB diploma.

4. Performance of students with disabilities and limited English proficient students on SOL tests and alternate assessments as appropriate.

~~25. Attendance rates for students for the most recent three-year period for which such data are available;~~ The accreditation rating awarded to the school.

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~~36. Incidents of physical violence and weapon possession occurring at the school reported by the school division to the Department of Education under §22.1-280.1 of the Code of Virginia for the most recent three year period for which such data are available; Attendance rates for students.~~

7. Information related to school safety to include, but not limited to, incidents of physical violence (including fighting and other serious offenses), possession of firearms, and possession of other weapons.

8. Information related to qualifications and experience of the teaching staff including the percentage of the school's teachers endorsed in the area of their primary teaching assignment.

49. In addition, secondary schools' School Performance Report Cards shall include the following:

~~a. The number and percentage of students taking Advanced Placement courses and the number and percentage of those s earning a score of 3 or better on the Advanced Placement test; and the number and percentage of students taking college-level courses and the number and percentage of those students passing at least one such course; and~~

~~b. The number of Standard, Advanced Studies, Special and International Baccalaureate Diplomas, as well as the number and percentage of students awarded Certificates of Program Completion and GED certificates, the most recent three year period for which such data are available; and,~~

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~~e. Dropout rates for the current and previous three years.~~

a. Advanced Placement (AP) information to include percentage of students who take AP courses and percentage who take AP tests;

b. International Baccalaureate (IB) information to include percentage of students who are enrolled in IB programs and percentage of students who receive IB diplomas;

c. College-level course information to include percentage of students who take college-level courses;

d. Percentage of (1) diplomas and (2) certificates awarded to the senior class including GED certificates and (3) students who do not graduate;

e. Percentage of students in alternative programs that do not lead to a standard or advanced studies diploma;

f. Percentage of students in academic year Governor's Schools; and

g. Percentage of drop-outs.

~~5. The accreditation rating awarded to the school for the current and previous three years.~~

C. Cooperate with business and industry in formulating vocational educational programs and conduct joint enterprises involving personnel, facilities, training programs, and other resources.

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D. Encourage and support the establishment and/or continuation of a parent-teacher association or other organization and work cooperatively with it.

E. At the beginning of each school year, schools shall provide to its students' parent(s) and/or guardian(s):

1. the ~~academic~~ learning objectives developed in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-70 of these regulations to be achieved at their child's grade level, or, in high school, a copy of the syllabus for each of their child's courses, and a copy of the school division promotion, retention, and remediation policies.

2. a copy of the Standards of Learning applicable to the child's grade or course requirements and the approximate date and potential impact of the child's next SOL testing; and

3. annual notice to students at all grade levels of all requirements for Standard and Advanced Studies diplomas, and the Board's policies on promotion and retention as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-30 of these regulations.

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PART VIII

SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

- 8 VAC 20-131-280. Expectations for School Accountability
- 8 VAC 20-131-290. Procedures for Certifying Accreditation
Eligibility
- 8 VAC 20-131-300. Application of the Standards
- 8 VAC 20-131-310. Improvement Planning for Schools that are
Accredited with Warning
- 8 VAC 20-131-320. School Improvement Levels
- 8 VAC 20-131-325. Recognitions and Rewards for School
Accountability Performance
- 8 VAC 20-131-330. Waivers
- 8 VAC 20-131-340. Effective Dates

- 8 VAC 20-131-280. Expectations for School Accountability.

A. Schools will be accredited annually based on compliance with pre-accreditation eligibility requirements and achievement of the school accountability requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-300.D. of these regulations.

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B. These standards apply to schools for all grade levels, K-12, as listed below:

1. Schools with grades K-5 shall be classified as elementary schools;

2. Schools with grades 6-8 shall be classified as middle schools;

3. Schools with grades 9-12 shall be classified as secondary schools.

4. Schools with grade configurations other than these shall be classified in accordance with policies and practices of the Department of Education.

AC. Each school shall be accredited based primarily on achievement of the criteria established in 8 VAC 20-131-30 of these regulations as specified below:

1. All students enrolled in a grade or course in which a SOL test is administered shall take each applicable SOL test unless exempted from participating in all or part of the testing program by one of the following:

a. IEP or 504 Plan

b. LEP committee

c. use of alternate means for verified units of credit as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations.

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2. Evaluating the performance of schools shall take into consideration:

a. the percentage of eligible students who achieve a passing score on the prescribed SOL tests or other assessments used for verified units of credit as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110.B. of these regulations;

b. the percentage of those students with disabilities whose IEPs or 504 Plans specify their participation in alternate assessment who attain a proficient level score (beginning with the 2000-01 school year); and

c. the school's annual improvement as described in 8 VAC 20-131-300.D. of these regulations.

3. Eligible students shall be defined as the total number of students enrolled in the school at a grade or course for which an SOL test is required unless excluded under subsection E below and those students with disabilities who participate in the alternate assessment program.

~~14. Elementary schools shall be evaluated by the percentage of the school's eligible students in grades three and five who achieve a passing score on the SOL tests in the four core academic areas for their respective grades administered in the school.~~

~~2. Middle schools shall be evaluated by achievement of eligible students on the SOL tests in the four core academic areas for 8th grade and end of course tests where applicable.~~

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~~3. Secondary schools shall be evaluated by student achievement on the end of course SOL tests taken.~~

~~4. Schools with grade configurations other than those identified in 8 VAC 20-131-290 E of these regulations for elementary, middle, or secondary schools shall be evaluated by student achievement on state SOL tests for the grades identified above that are housed in the school.~~

5. Schools with grade configurations that do not house a grade or offer courses for which SOL tests are administered will be paired with another school in the division housing one or more of the grades in which SOL tests are administered. The pairing of such schools will be made upon the ~~advice~~/recommendation of the local superintendent. The schools should have a "feeder" relationship and the grades should be contiguous.

~~6. For purposes of accreditation, eligible students shall be the total number of students enrolled in the school at the grade level of the SOL tests except for those students whose IEP or 504 Plan or LEP committee excludes them from participating in the testing program.~~

BD. Special purpose schools such as regional, ~~or stand-alone~~ special education, alternative, or vocational schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the school's programs offered in the school and approved by the Board ~~of Education~~ prior to August 1 of the school

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year for which approval is requested. ~~Every school that awards a diploma shall meet the requirements for secondary schools and for graduation as defined in Parts III and IV.~~ Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a standard or advanced studies diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations.

~~C. Evaluating the performance of schools shall take into consideration: the percentage of eligible students who achieve a passing score on the prescribed SOL tests or, for those students with disabilities who cannot participate in the SOL tests, a proficient level score on an alternative assessment prescribed by the Board (beginning with school year 2000-2001), and the school's annual improvement during the implementation years toward the established standard school expectations at the various levels as described in 8 VAC 20-131-300 D. Schools with large numbers of transient students and/or non-English speaking immigrant students may receive additional accommodations according to tolerances established by the Board of Education. Such schools shall be evaluated according to the Individual School Accreditation Plan approved by the Board.~~

E. When calculating the passing rates on SOL tests for the purpose of school accountability, the following tolerances for limited English proficient (LEP) and transfer students will apply:

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1. LEP students shall have a one time exemption in each of the four core areas for SOL tests designed to assess SOL content in kindergarten through eighth grade.

2. LEP students shall not be exempted from participating in the SOL end-of-course testing.

3. The scores of LEP students enrolled in Virginia public schools fewer than eleven (11) semesters shall be removed from the calculation used for the purposes of school accreditation required by 8 VAC 20-131-280 C and 8 VAC 20-131-300 D of these regulations. Completion of a semester shall be based on school membership days. Membership days are defined as the days the student is officially enrolled in a Virginia public school, regardless of days absent or present. For a semester to count as a completed semester, a student must have been in membership for a majority of the membership days of the semester. Semesters need not be consecutive.

4. In accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-30 of these regulations, all students who transfer into Virginia public schools are expected to take and pass all applicable SOL tests unless they have been exempted as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-280 C. 1.

5. All students who transfer within a school division shall have their scores counted in the calculation of the school's accountability (accreditation) rating. Students who transfer into a Virginia school from another Virginia school division, another state, or another country, in kindergarten through eighth grade shall be expected to take all applicable SOL tests. However, if the transfer

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takes place after the 20th instructional day following the opening of school, the scores on these tests will not be used in calculating school accountability (accreditation) ratings.

6. Students who transfer into a Virginia middle or high school from another state or country and enroll in a course for which there is an end-of-course SOL test shall be expected to take the test for that course. However, if the transfer takes place after 20 instructional hours per course have elapsed following the opening of school or beginning of the semester if applicable, the scores on those tests will not be used in calculating school accountability (accreditation) ratings in the year the transfer occurs.

ƆF. Pre-accreditation requirements: As a prerequisite to the awarding of an accreditation rating as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-300, Application of the Standards, each new or existing school shall document, in a manner prescribed by the Board the following: ~~its~~ (1) compliance with the requirements to offer courses that will allow students to complete the graduation requirements in 8 VAC 20-131-50, (2) the ability to offer the instructional program prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-70 through 8 VAC 20-131-100 (3) the leadership and staffing requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-210 through 8 VAC 20-131-240, and (4) the facilities and safety provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-260 of these regulations.

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8 VAC 20-131-290. Procedures for Certifying Accreditation
Eligibility.

A. Schools will be ~~initially~~ accredited under these standards annually based on compliance with the pre-accreditation criteria described in 8 VAC 20-131-280.DF. ~~above~~.

B. To be eligible for accreditation, the principal of each school and the division superintendent shall certify to the Department of Education:

1. The extent to which each school meets standards reported as met in the previous year described in 8 VAC 20-131-280 D

2. That the SOL have been fully incorporated into his/her school division's curriculum in all accreditation-eligible schools and the SOL material is being taught to all students eligible to take the SOL tests. This shall be verified in writing to the Board no later than July 1 of every year, by each local school division superintendent.~~and~~

3. ~~shall submit information on a~~ Actions taken to correct any ~~warnings or advisements~~ non-compliance issues cited in the previous year.

The principal of each school and the division superintendent shall submit, ~~as required~~, pre-accreditation eligibility reports in a

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manner prescribed by the Board, ~~through the division superintendent,~~
and to the Department of Education. Failure to submit the reports on
time will constitute grounds for denying accreditation to the school.

C. In keeping with provisions of the Standards of Quality, and
in conjunction with the six-year plan of the division, each school
shall prepare and implement a biennial school plan that shall be
available to students, parents, staff and the public. Each biennial
school plan shall be evaluated as part of the development of the next
biennial plan. ~~Except for the biennial school plan, written division-~~
~~wide plans available in and applicable to each school may be used to~~
~~satisfy all other written plans required in these standards.~~ Schools
may use other plans to satisfy the requirement for the biennial plan
with prior written approval from the Department of Education.

D. With the approval of the local school board, ~~local~~ schools
seeking to implement experimental and/or innovative programs ~~that are~~
not consistent with accreditation standards or other regulations
promulgated by the Board shall submit a waiver request, on forms
provided, to the Board ~~of Education~~ for evaluation and approval prior
to implementation. The request must include the following:

1. purpose and objectives of the experimental/ innovative
programs;i
2. description and duration of the programs;i
3. anticipated outcomes;i ~~outline, length,~~

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4. number of students affected~~7~~i and
5. evaluation procedures~~i~~ and
6. mechanisms for measuring goals, objectives, and student academic achievement.

Except as specified below, the Board may grant~~, for a period up to five years,~~ for a period up to five years, a waiver of any regulations promulgated by the Board that are not mandated by state law or federal law or designed to promote health or safety. The Board may grant all or a portion of the request. Waivers of requirements in 8 VAC 20-131-30 ~~(Student Achievement Expectations)~~, 8 VAC 20-131-50 ~~(Requirements for Graduation)~~, 8 VAC 20-131-70 ~~(Program of Instruction and Learning Objectives)~~, and 8 VAC 20-131-280 through 8 VAC 20-131-340 shall not be granted, and no waiver may be approved for a program which would violate the provisions of the Standards of Quality.

~~E. These standards apply to schools for all grade levels, K-12, as listed below:~~

~~1. Schools with grades K-5 shall be classified as elementary schools:~~

~~2. Schools with grades 6-8 shall be classified as middle schools:~~

~~3. Schools with grades 9-12 shall be classified as secondary schools.~~

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8 VAC 20-131-300. Application of the Standards.

A. ~~Existing~~ Schools which that meet the pre-accreditation requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-280.D. of these regulations ~~may~~ shall be assigned one of the following ratings as described in this section:

1. Earned During Academic Years Ending in 2000 through 2003:

a. Fully Accredited

i. Fully Accredited with Honors

ii. Fully Accredited with High Honors

b. Provisionally Accredited

i. Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement

c. Accredited with Warning in (specified academic area or areas)

d. Conditionally Accredited

2. Earned During Academic Years Ending in 2004 and 2005:

a. Fully Accredited

i. Fully Accredited with Honors

ii. Fully Accredited with High Honors

b. Accredited with Warning in (specified academic area or areas)

c. Conditionally Accredited

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~~B. New schools will be awarded the status of Conditionally Accredited pending an evaluation of the school's achievement performance and when pre-accreditation requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-280 D have been met.~~

EB. Compliance with the student academic achievement expectations shall be documented to the Board directly through the reporting of the results of student performance on SOL tests and other alternative means of assessing student academic achievement as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-110 B of these regulations. Compliance with

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other provisions of these standards regulations will be documented in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Board.

DC. Accreditation Ratings Defined.

1. Fully Accredited+. A school will be rated Fully Accredited when the prescribed levels of eligible student performance identified below on SOL tests are met and the school meets pre-accreditation requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-280 D of these regulations its eligible students meet the pass rate of 70% in each of the four core academic areas except in the third grade where the pass rate in science and history is 50%.

2. A school will be rated Fully Accredited with Honors when the pass rate reaches or exceeds 80% in each of the four core academic areas.

3. A school will be rated Fully Accredited with High Honors when the pass rate reaches or exceeds 90% in each of the four core academic areas.

a. For purposes of school accreditation, at third grade the percent of students passing shall be as follows: 70% for English/reading; 70% for mathematics; 50% for science; and 50% for history.

b. At the fifth and eighth grades, the percent of students passing shall be 70% in each of the four core disciplines.

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~~e. At the secondary school level, the percent of students passing shall be 70% in each of the four core disciplines.~~

~~2. Provisionally Accredited. A school will be Provisionally Accredited during the period of implementation of these accrediting procedures when the student achievement requirements for full accreditation are not met, and yet there is annual improvement in the percentage of the school's eligible students who earn a passing score on the SOL tests. The Provisionally Accredited rating will cease to exist at the end of the 2002-2003 school year.~~

~~All schools will be rated as Provisionally Accredited on July 1, 1998.~~

4. Provisionally Accredited. A school will be rated Provisionally Accredited when it has met annual improvement benchmarks but has not met the requirement to be rated Fully Accredited during the academic years 1999-2000 through 2002-03.

5. Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement. A school will be rated Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement when it fails to meet improvement benchmarks as defined in 8 VAC 20-131-320 of these regulations, in one or more academic area(s) during the academic years 1999-2000 through 2002-03.

6. Accredited with Warning (in specific academic area or areas).

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a. Based on a school's academic performance as set forth herein during academic years ending in 2000-03, a school will be Accredited with Warning (in specific academic area or areas) if its pass-rate performance on SOL tests is 20 or more percentage points below any of annual improvement benchmarks set forth in the Appendix to these standards.

b. Based on a school's academic performance during academic years ending in 2004 and 2005, a school will be Accredited with Warning in (specific academic area or areas) if it does not meet the pass-rate requirements to be Fully Accredited.

c. Based on a school's academic performance during academic years ending in 2006 and beyond, a school will be Accredited with Warning in (specific academic area or areas) if it has achieved Fully Accredited status but has failed to meet the requirements to maintain that status in any one year. Following 2006, a school may remain in the Accredited with Warning status for no more than three consecutive years.

7. Accreditation Denied. Based on a school's academic performance as set forth herein during academic years ending in 2006 and beyond, a school shall be rated Accreditation Denied if it fails to meet the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited, except for schools rated Accredited with Warning as set forth in 8 VAC 20-131-300.C.4.c. above.

8. Accreditation Denied/Improving School Near Accreditation. A school that has never met the requirements to be

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rated Fully Accredited by end of the academic year ending in 2006 may apply to the Board for this accreditation designation. To be eligible, the school must meet the following criteria:

a. At least 70% of its students must have passed the applicable English SOL tests in the year ending in 2006,

b. At least 60% of its students must have passed the SOL tests in the other three core academic areas in the year ending in 2006,

c. In each academic area in which the pass rate is below 70%, the school's pass rate must have increased by at least 25 percentage points as compared to the pass rates on tests taken during the academic year ending in 1999.

To retain this rating, a school must continue to show annual improvement in each academic area in which the pass rate is below 70%. This rating will cease to exist after the academic year ending in 2009.

9. Accreditation Denied/Reconstituted School. A school that has failed to meet the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited or Accredited with Warning after the academic year ending in 2006 may apply to the Board for the designation of Accreditation Denied/Reconstituted School. The Board may grant this designation to the applicant school if the school effectively completes a reconstitution in accordance with the criteria set forth in 8 VAC 20-

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131-300.E.9. This designation will cease to exist after the academic year ending in 2009.

10. Accreditation Denied/Failed to Reconstitute.

Following the academic year ending in 2006, a school that has failed to meet the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited or Accredited with Warning and which has not been approved by the Board for either of the ratings in subdivisions 6 or 7 above shall be rated Accreditation Denied/Failed to Reconstitute. This designation will cease to exist after the academic year ending in 2009.

~~3. Accredited with Warning. A school will be Accredited with Warning when the requirements for the Fully Accredited rating are not met and, in school years prior to 2003-04, the school fails to meet the requirements for the Provisionally Accredited rating.~~

~~a. Schools that are Accredited with Warning shall develop a corrective action plan as described in 8 VAC 20-131-310 designed to improve student achievement on the SOL tests for the grade levels identified in 8 VAC 20-131-280 over two years.~~

~~b. No school may be Accredited with Warning for more than three consecutive years.~~

~~4. Accreditation Denied. A school will be denied accreditation when the requirements for the rating of Fully Accredited are not met and when, after three years of being rated Accredited with Warning and despite corrective action, the school has failed to meet the specified achievement level.~~

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11. Conditionally Accredited. New schools that are comprised of students from one or more existing schools in the division will be awarded this status pending an evaluation of the school's eligible students' performance on SOL tests to be rated Fully Accredited for a period not to exceed two years.

In the second year, if the school does not meet the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited or higher, it will retain its Conditionally Accredited status for another year. School improvement targets shall be set in accordance with 8 VAC 20-131-320 of these regulations for ratings in subsequent years.

D. Action Requirements for Ratings

1. Effective with the end of the academic year 1999-2000, the Board will establish year-by-year pass-rate benchmarks that must be met in each academic area for a school to achieve a rating of Provisionally Accredited. The benchmarks shall be based on test results, combining pass rates on all tests administered in a school within each academic area.

2. Schools that fail to meet the benchmarks to be rated Provisionally Accredited shall be rated either Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement or, in the case of schools that fall 20 percentage points or more below one or more benchmarks, Accredited with Warning in (Academic Area).

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3. The benchmarks shall be incorporated into these regulations as an Appendix to these standards.

4. With such funds as are appropriated by the General Assembly, the Department of Education shall develop a school academic review process and monitoring plan designed to assist schools rated as Accredited with Warning. All procedures and operations for the academic review process shall be approved and adopted by the Board.

5. Any school that is rated Accredited with Warning in English or mathematics is expected to adopt an instructional method that has a proven track record of success at raising student achievement in those areas as appropriate.

6. The superintendent and principal shall certify in writing to the Board that such a method has been adopted and implemented.

7. The Board shall publish a list of recommended instructional methods.

8. Adoption of instructional methods referenced in subsections 5 and 7 above shall be funded by eligible local, state and federal funds.

9. A school that seeks the reconstituted status shall be reconstituted under the supervision of an improvement audit team in consultation with the division superintendent. The reconstitution shall include:

a. A request to the Board from the local school board seeking a rating of Accreditation Denied/Reconstituted School

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for any school in the division shall include an agreement to conduct significant review and needs assessment of the school by an Improvement Audit Team (hereinafter "Team"). All procedures and operations for the improvement audit teams shall be approved and adopted by the Board. The review and needs assessment shall include, but not be limited to:

i. Evaluation of the performance of all personnel in the school and the central office, the school's operating procedures and the school board's policies;

ii. The level of parent participation in the school program; and

iii. Certification as to whether the school adopted an instructional method with a proven track record as expected by 8 VAC 20-131-300.E.5.

b. An evaluation of school operations including:

i. An evaluation of the principal for retention, transfer or dismissal by the Team with the appropriate action taken by the local school division based on the Team's recommendations;

ii. An evaluation of the teaching staff for retention, transfer or dismissal, with appropriate action taken by the local school division based on the recommendation of the Team. The principal (either retained or newly hired) shall take part in the evaluation of the teaching staff as an equal partner with the Team; and

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iii. As a part of the evaluation of the school and its staff, the following factors shall be considered:

a) the level of improvement on the SOL tests demonstrated by the school in each academic areas since 1998;

b) the performance of the school's students on the two most recent Stanford Achievement Test Series, 9th Edition (or then equivalent) nationally-normed test used in the Virginia State Assessment Program; and

c) the level of cooperation with the Team demonstrated by the school when the school was rated Accredited with Warning, including whether the school implemented the instructional models recommended for schools which fell more than 20 percentage points below the benchmarks in English or mathematics.

d) meaningful input of teachers of the school in the development of the reports submitted to the Board and the school's reconstitution plan; and

e) input of parents concerning the reconstitution process and goals.

The Board may approve as an acceptable reconstitution alternative remedial actions that have been effectively implemented by the school or local school board that the Board believes represent fundamental changes in the operations of the school that are designed to achieve the rating of "Fully Accredited".

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Schools that receive this status shall annually report their progress toward meeting the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited to the Governor, the chairmen of the House and Senate Education, Senate Finance, and House Appropriations committees of the General Assembly, and the Board.

10. In any school division in which one-third or more of the schools have been rated Accreditation Denied, the superintendent shall be evaluated by the local school board with a copy of such evaluation submitted to the Board no later than July 1st of each year in which such condition exists.

8 VAC 20-131-310. Improvement Planning for Schools that are Accredited with Warning.

A. Schools that are rated Accredited with Warning must undertake improvement planning targeted to increasing student achievement as measured by the SOL tests immediately upon receipt of the results of an academic review conducted in accordance with policies and operations adopted by the Board. The plan shall be developed collaboratively by the principal and teaching staff of the school. Parents shall be included in the planning process.

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The plan should be completed by the end of the first semester and, to the extent possible, implemented in the second semester.

~~B. A corrective action plan must be developed by each school Accredited with Warning upon receipt of notification of the awarding of this rating. The plan must be signed by the principal, and the local superintendent, and approved by the local school board and submitted to the Board of Education for approval. The plan shall be developed with the assistance of parents and teachers and made available to the public. During the implementation years from 1998-2002, a school that is Accredited with Warning shall develop and implement an improvement plan approved by the local school board and that is designed to assist the school to meet the student achievement standard to be Fully Accredited as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-300 (D.1 3). If a school continues to be Accredited with Warning during the 2001-02 school year, the school shall submit, by October 1, 2002, an improvement plan to the Board of Education, with the components outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-310 (D) in a manner prescribed by the Board of Education. The plan shall be implemented not later than the beginning of the 2003-04 school year.~~

B. A three-year School Improvement Plan must be developed and implemented, based on the results of an academic review of each school that is rated Accredited with Warning upon receipt of notification of the awarding of this rating and receipt of the results of the academic review.

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1. The plan shall be developed with the assistance of parents and teachers and made available to the public.

2. The plan must include the components outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-310.D.of these regulations.

3. The improvement plan must be approved by the division superintendent and the local school board and be designed to assist the school in meeting the student achievement standard to be Fully Accredited as outlined in 8 VAC 20-131-300 of these regulations.

~~C. The Board of Education shall establish a Peer Educator Advisory Group to provide technical assistance in evaluating corrective action plans. The advisory group shall consist of fifteen (15) educators with five (5) representatives each from urban, suburban, and rural schools. Representatives shall be academic classroom teachers and principals from elementary, middle, and secondary schools and shall be selected from among the top ten percent of schools in each category on the state SOL tests. Each member of the committee shall serve for no more than two years. Terms of service shall be designed to provide continuity to the group as a whole.~~

DC. The plan shall address the annual improvement benchmarks set in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-320 of these

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regulations. In addition, the improvement plan shall include each of the following:

1. How the school will meet the school improvement ~~targets~~ benchmarks for each of the years covered by the plan,
2. Specific measures for achieving and documenting student academic improvement,
3. Amount of time in the school day devoted to instruction in the core academic areas,
4. Instructional practices designed to remediate ~~currently failing~~ students who have not been successful on SOL tests,
5. Intervention strategies designed to prevent ~~future students from experiencing similar failure~~ further declines in student performance,
6. Staff development ~~required,~~ needed,
7. Strategies to involve and assist parents in raising their child's academic performance, ~~assistance needed , and~~
8. ~~Flexibility~~ Flexibility or waivers to state or local regulations necessary to meet the objectives of the plan~~-, and~~
9. A description of the manner in which local, state and federal funds are used to support the implementation of the components of this plan.

As part of its approval of the ~~corrective action~~ school improvement plan, the Board ~~of Education~~ may grant a local school

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board a waiver from the requirements of any regulations promulgated by the Board when such a waiver is available.

~~ED.~~ ~~Schools in this rating~~ rated Accredited with Warning shall ~~document to~~ assure their community that appropriate and effective instructional intervention and/or remediation and additional instructional time is being provided for those students

~~(1).~~ not achieving a passing score of ~~proficient on the SOL~~
tests, or

~~(2).~~ not passing the Literacy Passport Tests, or

3. students identified as at-risk.

E. The school improvement plan and related annual reports submitted to the Board shall provide documentation of the continuous efforts of the school to achieve the requirements to become rated Fully Accredited and be sealed by clerk of board. The Board shall adopt and approve all policies and formats for the submission of annual reports under this section. The reports shall be due no later than October 1 of the school year.

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8 VAC 20-131-320. School Improvement Levels.

The Board ~~of Education~~ has set the minimum acceptable level of annual ~~school~~ improvement required for a school beginning at the end of the 1999-2000 academic year to achieve the rating of Provisionally Accredited. These improvement levels are outlined in the Appendix to these standards. The benchmarks are based on test results, combining pass rates on all tests within each academic area. In no event shall a school be awarded the status of Fully Accredited if the minimum student pass-rate established by the Board is not met.

8 VAC 20-131-325. Recognitions and Rewards for School
Accountability Performance.

A. Schools rated as Fully Accredited with High Honors, Fully Accredited with Honors, Fully Accredited, or Provisionally Accredited shall be recognized by the Board in accordance with procedures it shall establish. Such recognition may include:

1. Public announcements recognizing individual schools;
2. Tangible rewards;
3. Waivers of certain Board regulations;
4. Exemptions from certain reporting requirements;
5. Recognition as a Superior School of Merit; or

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6. Other commendations deemed appropriate to recognize high achievement.

In addition to Board recognition, local school boards shall adopt policies to recognize individual schools through public announcements, media releases, participation in community activities for input purposes when setting policy relating to schools and budget development, as well as other appropriate recognition.

B. Schools and school divisions may be eligible to receive recognition as follows:

1. Superior School of Merit. The designation of Superior School of Merit is the highest recognition and honor that a school can receive in Virginia. To be recognized as a Superior School of Merit, a school must make application to and be approved by the Board in accordance with the policies and guidelines established by the Board. A school may qualify for this recognition by: (a) achieving the accreditation status of Accredited with High Honors, Accredited with Honors, or Fully Accredited and (b) by providing assistance to schools rated as Provisionally Accredited, Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement or Accredited with Warning. The Board shall formally award and recognize all Superior Schools of Merit on an annual basis.

2. Superior School Division of Merit. The designation of Superior School Division of Merit is the highest recognition and honor

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that a local school division can receive in Virginia. To be recognized as a Superior School Division of Merit a school division must make application to and be approved by the Board in accordance with the policies and guidelines established by the Board. To be recognized as a Superior School Division of Merit, a school division must have at least:

a. 50% of its schools recognized as Superior Schools of Merit; or

b. 25% of its schools recognized as Superior Schools of Merit and central office staff provides technical assistance to a school or schools outside the division that are rated as Provisionally Accredited, Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement, or Accredited with Warning in accordance with policies and guidelines adopted by the Board.

The Board shall formally award and recognize all Superior School Divisions of Merit on an annual basis.

C. A school that achieves a rating of Fully Accredited with Honors or Fully Accredited with High Honors, may, upon application to the Department of Education, receive a waiver from the following regulations and reporting requirements for a period of up to three years or as long as the schools maintain a passing rate on SOL tests of 70% or above:

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8 VAC 20-131-80. Instructional Programs in Elementary Schools

8 VAC 20-131-90. Instructional Programs in Middle Schools

8 VAC 20-131-100. Instructional Programs in Secondary Schools

8 VAC 20-131-110. Standard and Verified Units of Credit (Clock Hour Requirement Only)

8 VAC 20-131-120. Summer School

8 VAC 20-131-130. Elective Credit

8 VAC 20-131-140. College Preparatory Programs and Opportunities for Postsecondary Credit

8 VAC 20-131-150. Standard School Year and School Day

8 VAC 20-131-190. Library Media, Materials and Equipment

8 VAC 20-131-200. Extracurricular and Other School Activities

8 VAC 20-131-210. Role of the Principal

8 VAC 20-131-220. Role of Professional Staff

8 VAC 20-131-230. Role of Support Staff

8 VAC 20-131-240. Administrative and Support Staff Required

8 VAC 20-131-250. Alternative Staffing Plan

D. Governor's Award for Outstanding Improvement

This award will be given to schools in each classification defined in 8 VAC 20-131-280.B. of these regulations rated below Fully Accredited that exceed the improvement levels defined in 8 VAC 20-131-320 by ten percentage points or more in one year. In addition, any

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school that raises its rating from Accredited with Warning to Fully Accredited in one year will receive this award when it was ten percentage points or more below the performance level to be rated Fully Accredited.

E. Exemplary Instructional Method of High Distinction

1. The designation of Exemplary Instructional Method of High Distinction is the an honor awarded by the Board to recognize instructional methods that have been highly successful in improving student achievement. To be recognized as an Exemplary Instructional Method of High Distinction, an applicant must make application to and be approved by the Board in accordance with the policies and guidelines established by the Board. An instructional method that has not been commercially developed may qualify for this recognition by:

a. having a demonstrated and documented proven track record of success in improving the academic achievement of pupils in:

i. at least 11 public schools in one school division; or,

ii. seven school divisions that have used the same method.

2. This award shall be awarded annually by the Board.

F. Exemplary Administrative Method of Distinction

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1. The designation of Exemplary Administrative Method of High Distinction is an honor awarded by the Board to recognize administrative methods that have improved school operations that resulted in improvement student achievement. To be recognized as a Exemplary Administrative Method of High Distinction, an applicant must make application to and be approved by the Board in accordance with the policies and guidelines established by the Board. An administrative method that has not been commercially developed may qualify for this recognition by:

a. having a demonstrated and documented successful, proven, track record of success in improving the academic achievement of pupils in:

i. at least 11 public schools in one school division; or,

ii. seven school divisions that have used the same method.

2. This distinction will be awarded annually by the Board.

G. Master Principal of Distinction

1. The designation of Master Principal of Distinction is an honor awarded by the Board to outstanding principals in Virginia public schools. To be recognized as a Master Principal of Distinction, application must be made to, and be approved by, the

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Board in accordance with policies and guidelines established by the Board. The application must show, at a minimum, that the principal has mentored at least two other principals.

2. This distinction will be awarded on an annual basis

H. Master Teacher of Distinction

1. The designation of Master Teacher of Distinction is an honor awarded by the Board to outstanding teachers in a Virginia public school. To be recognized as a Master Teacher of Distinction, application must be made to, and be approved by, the Board in accordance with the policies and guidelines established by the Board. The application must show, at a minimum, that the teacher has mentored at least two other teachers.

2. This distinction will be awarded on an annual basis.

I. Master Creative Educator

1. The designation of Master Creative Educator is an honor awarded by the Board to recognize the use of creativity in Virginia public schools. To be recognized as a Master Creative Educator, application must be made to, and be approved by, the Board in accordance with the policies and guidelines established by the Board. The application must show, at a minimum, that the educator has demonstrated creativity in the education environment.

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2. This distinction will be awarded on an annual basis.

8 VAC 20-131-330. Waivers.

Waivers of some of the requirements of these regulations may be granted by the Board based on submission of a request from the division superintendent and chairman of the local school board. The request shall include documentation of the need for the waiver. In no event will waivers be granted to the requirements of Part III-Student Achievement.

8 VAC 20-131-340. Effective Dates.

A. With the exception of certain provisions identified below, these regulations are effective upon adoption.

B. The units of credit requirements for graduation described in 8 VAC 20-131-50 of these regulations are effective with the ninth-grade class of 1998-99 ~~for the graduating class of 2002~~. Only standard units of credit will be available until the implementation of the requirement of verified units of credit. Students entering the ninth grade prior to the implementation date of these regulations shall meet the requirements of standards adopted by the Board in October 1992.

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C. The requirement for verified units of credit based on student performance on the SOL tests ~~related to courses~~ will become effective for graduation with the ninth-grade class of 2000-01 ~~for the graduating class of 2004.~~

~~D. Each school that does not meet the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited will be rated as Provisionally Accredited during the implementation period of 1998-1999 through 2002-2003 provided there is annual improvement in the percentage of the school's eligible students who earn a passing score on each of the SOL tests and the school continues to meet the pre-accreditation requirements of 8 VAC 20-131-280 D. If there is no improvement or there is a decline in the SOL test result percentages over the previous year, the school will be rated Accredited with Warning. Schools that meet the requirements to be rated Fully Accredited will be upgraded to that rating. Beginning with the 2000-01 school year, schools rated Accredited with Warning must undergo an academic review in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Board and prepare a school improvement plan as required by 8 VAC 20-131-310 of these regulations.~~

E. Beginning with the 2003-2004 accrediting cycle, each school will be expected to meet the level of performance established for a Fully Accredited rating in accordance with the provisions of 8 VAC 20-131-300. Schools not meeting this requirement will be rated Accredited with Warning.

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F. Beginning with the accreditation ratings earned during the 2007-08 school year, the awarding of an accreditation rating shall be based on the percentage of students passing SOL tests on a trailing three-year average of passing percentages in each of the four core academic areas, or the most current year's scores, whichever is higher.

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APPENDIX I

Improvement Chart for Provisional Accreditation Through 2003

Each School Must Meet Following Annual Pass-Rate Benchmarks in Tests
Given in the Academic Years Indicated to earn Provisional
Accreditation:

	<u>English</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>History/Soc.Studies</u>
<u>Grade 3</u>				
1999-00	60%	60%	50%	50%
2000-01	63%	63%	50%	50%
2001-02	66%	66%	50%	50%
2002-03	70%	70%	50%	50%
<u>Grade 5 (includes tests given in Grade 4)</u>				
1999-00	60%	50%	60%	45%
2000-01	63%	55%	63%	50%
2001-02	66%	65%	66%	60%
2002-03	70%	70%	70%	70%
<u>Middle (includes any tests given in middle school grades)</u>				
1999-00	60%	55%	60%	45%
2000-01	63%	60%	63%	50%
2001-02	66%	65%	66%	60%
2002-03	70%	70%	70%	70%
<u>High School</u>				
1999-00	60%	55%	55%	45%
2000-01	63%	60%	60%	55%
2001-02	66%	65%	65%	65%
2002-03	70%	70%	70%	70%

* Schools that do not meet the benchmarks (but are within 19 percentage points in each academic area will be rated "Provisionally Accredited/Needs Improvement"

** Schools that are 20 or more percentage points below the benchmarks in any academic area will be rated "Accredited with Warning in (academic area)"